

NOTES TO LETTERS

Letter 1

1. "Friends at Home" refers to Owen's father, Thomas; mother, Almira; and younger sister, Alice. Numbers 27–31, page 402, Owego, Roll 867, Microcopy 653, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860* (hereafter referred to as M653), Record Group 29, Records of the Bureau of the Census, National Archives Building (hereafter referred to as RG 29).
2. Camp Woodbury, named after the then commander of the Volunteer Engineer Brigade, Daniel P. Woodbury, was located in Alexandria, Virginia, near Fort Ward and the Fairfax Seminary. D.P. Woodbury to Captain Furgison, 9 April 1862, page 1, Volume 52/117 AP, Letters Sent, Volunteer Engineer Brigade, Army of the Potomac (hereafter referred to as LS, VEB, A of P), Record Group 393, Records of United States Army Continental Commands, 1821–1920, National Archives Building (hereafter referred to as RG 393) and Record of Events Cards (hereafter referred to as REC), Regimental Return, March 1862, Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment and Muster roll, March–April 1862, Company I, Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment, Roll 136, Microcopy 594, *Compiled Records Showing Service of Military Units in Volunteer Union Organizations* (hereafter referred to as M594), Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, National Archives Building (hereafter referred to as RG 94).
3. Apparently, Owen meant Manassas Junction on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, which ran from Alexandria to Lynchburg, Virginia. Angus James Johnston III, *Virginia Railroads in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), pp. 3–4 and 257, fn. 4.
4. Fortress, actually Fort, Monroe, first garrisoned in 1823, is located at Point Comfort, Virginia, between the York and James rivers. Francis Paul Prucha, *A Guide to the Military Posts of the United States 1789–1895* (Madison, Wisconsin: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1964), p. 92.
5. Colonel J. McLeod Murphy commanded the Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880–1901) (hereafter referred to as *Official Records, Army*), Series I, Volume II, Part I, p. 134.
6. The steamer *Louisiana* transported the Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment from Alexandria to Ship Point, Virginia, 9–11 April 1862. Congress, *House Executive Document No. 337, Vessels Bought, Sold, and Chartered by the United States, 1861–68* (40th Cong., 2d sess.) (hereafter referred to as *Vessels Bought*), pp. 58–59, and REC, Regimental Return, April 1862, Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment and Morning Report, April 1862, Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment, Roll 136, M594, RG 94.
7. No information pertaining to "Putt," probably a nickname, could be found.

Letter 2

1. Harrison's Landing, on the James River, was the headquarters and supply base for McClellan's army from 3 July–16 August 1862. Mark M. Boatner, *The Civil War Dictionary* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1959), p. 379. For the location of Harrison's Landing, see War Department, *Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*

(Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1891–1895) (hereafter referred to as *Official Atlas*).

2. “Cesesh” was slang for Confederates.

3. The “big battle” took place at Cedar Mountain, Virginia, on 9 August 1862, where Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson’s Confederate forces defeated some of John Pope’s Union troops under the command of Nathaniel Banks. Pope, formerly a Topographical Engineer officer, became commander of the Army of Virginia on 26 June 1862 and suffered a severe defeat at Second Manassas, 29–30 August 1862. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, pp. 101–105 and 653–659.

4. *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated* was a popular newspaper/magazine during the Civil War with a format similar to *Harper’s Weekly*.

Letter 4

1. Stoneman’s Station was a stop on the Aquia and Fredericksburg Railroad, which carried supplies and men from Aquia Creek on the Potomac to Falmouth on the Rappahannock River. James A. Huston, *The Sinews of War: Army Logistics 1775–1923* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1966), pp. 223–224.

2. Philip R. Goodrich mustered in as a first sergeant in Company I, Fiftieth New York Engineers, on 26 August 1861, received a promotion to second lieutenant on 11 December 1862, and resigned from the service on 4 May 1863. Company I, Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment, Descriptive Books of Volunteer Organizations: Civil War, 1861–65 (hereafter referred to as Co. I, 50th, DB), RG 94, and Frederick Phisterer, Compiler, *New York in the War of the Rebellion 1861 to 1865* (Albany: J.B. Lyon Company, 1912), p. 1679.

3. Before promotion to second lieutenant on 11 December 1862, Philip R. Goodrich was orderly sergeant of Company I. Owen filled the vacancy when promoted to first sergeant on 2 February 1863. Thomas J. Owen, Compiled Military Service Record, Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment, Carded Records, Volunteer Organizations: Civil War (hereafter referred to as CMSR), RG 94.

4. Major General Joseph Hooker was commander of the Army of the Potomac, 26 January–28 June 1863. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, pp. 409–410.

5. Major General Ambrose Burnside, who directed the disastrous assault on Fredericksburg, 13 December 1862, commanded the Army of the Potomac, 10 November 1862–26 January 1863. George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy*. . . (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1891), Volume 2, p. 317.

6. “Little Mac” was George B. McClellan, an Engineer officer in the Army before the Civil War, who commanded the Army of the Potomac in the Peninsula and Antietam campaigns and was generally admired by the average soldier. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, p. 524.

Letter 5

1. Augustus S. Perkins mustered into the service on 18 December 1861 as a first lieutenant in Company I and received a promotion to captain on 18 July 1862. He was killed on 11 December 1862 at Fredericksburg, Virginia, by Confederate rifle fire while attempting to erect a ponton bridge over the Rappahannock River. Co. I, 50th, DB, RG 94; and Phisterer, *New York*, pp. 1684–85.

2. Mustered into the service as a private in Company I on 26 August 1861, Hanson G. Champlin died on 11 December 1862 at Fredericksburg, Virginia,

from enemy rifle fire while laying a ponton bridge across the Rappahannock River. Co. I, 50th, DB; and Hanson G. Champlin, CMSR, RG 94.

3. Fredericksburg, Virginia.

4. Joseph Hooker appointed Brigadier General Henry W. Benham commander of the Volunteer Engineer Brigade on 20 March 1863. *Official Records, Army*, Series I, Volume 25, Part II, p. 150 (Special Order No. 78, Army of the Potomac, 20 March 1863).

Letter 6

1. For other accounts and information relating to these Engineer operations at Franklin's Crossing on 5 June 1863, see Gilbert Thompson, *The Engineer Battalion in the Civil War*, Occasional Papers No. 44 (Washington, DC: Press of the Engineer School, 1910), pp. 34–35, and *Official Records, Army*, Series I, Volume 27, Part I, pp. 32–33 and 676–677, and Part III, p. 63.

2. Civil War historian Bell I. Wiley theorized that the sobriquet "Johnny Reb" or "Johnny" resulted from Union soldiers yelling out "Hello Johnny" to Confederate combatants opposing them. Bell I. Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1943), p. 13.

3. A ponton, or pontoon, as it was spelled during the Civil War, was a flat-bottomed vessel or similar object, constructed of wood or canvas, used to support a temporary or ponton bridge on which men and supplies could cross a body of water. For drawings of canvas ponton boats and bridges, see Number 1, Plate 106, in *Official Atlas*. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, p. 658, and John S. Scott, *A Dictionary of Civil Engineering* (Hammondsworth, England: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1958), p. 268.

4. William Watts Folwell received a commission as first lieutenant in Company G on 13 February 1862. Promoted to captain in Company I on 12 December 1862, he became a major on 1 February 1865. Brevetted a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Volunteers on 9 April 1865, Folwell mustered out of the service on 13 June 1865. Co. I, 50th DB, RG 94; Phisterer, *New York*, p. 1679; and Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927–1973) (hereafter referred to as *DAB*), Volume 3, pp. 495–496.

5. The "Minie ball," a cylindroconical rifle bullet with an expanding base, was used in Civil War shoulder arms and handguns. Captain Claude E. Minie of the French Army, who improved upon the original "Minie ball," lent his name to this invention of Captain John Norton of the British Army. John Quick, *Dictionary of Weapons and Military Terms* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1973), p. 307; and Bernard and Fawn Brodie, *From Crossbow to H-Bomb* (Revised and Enlarged Edition, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1973), p. 132.

6. Major General John Sedgwick commanded the Sixth Army Corps of the Army of the Potomac on 5 June 1863. A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy in 1837, Sedgwick remained in the Army until his death on 9 May 1864, mortally wounded by a Confederate sharpshooter at Spotsylvania Court House. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, pp. 730–731.

7. Mustered in as a captain of Company E on 29 August 1861, Ira Spaulding received a commission as major on 14 October 1862 and as lieutenant colonel on 1 January 1864. Before mustering out of the service on 13 June 1865, he received brevet commissions as colonel on 1 April 1864 and as brigadier general on 9 April 1865. Ira Spaulding, CMSR, RG 94; and Phisterer, *New York*,

p. 1687.

8. John E. Armstrong mustered into service on 6 September 1861 and reported to Company F. He transferred to Company I on 1 November 1861. Armstrong received a promotion to corporal on 2 February 1863. At the expiration of his service, he mustered out on 20 September 1864. John E. Armstrong, CMSR, and Co. I, 50th, DB, RG 94.

9. Calvin Q. Newcome mustered in as a private in Company F on 27 August 1862. He received a promotion to sergeant on 8 October 1862 and a commission as first lieutenant in Company C on 28 February 1863. Newcome resigned his commission on 30 July 1864. Phisterer, *New York*, p. 1684.

Letter 7

1. "Old Ground" refers to the former Camp Lesley, which by the date of this letter had become the Washington Engineer Depot.

2. Information pertaining to these operations can be found in *Official Records, Army*, Series I, Volume 27, Part III, p. 527.

3. The identity of "Ely" is unknown.

4. The identity of "Longstreet" is unknown. William Lay, Jr., of the Tioga (New York) County Historical Society wrote that such a street did not exist in Owego during the Civil War. Apparently, Owen was not referring to James Longstreet, a Confederate general in the Army of Northern Virginia, either. In September 1863, Longstreet and his command left the East for Tennessee, but that was long after Owen wrote his letter.

Letter 8

1. For more information pertaining to the operations of the Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment following the Battle of Gettysburg, see Paul H. Thienel, "Engineers in the Union Army 1861-1865," *The Military Engineer* 47 (January-February 1955), p. 40.

2. Owen is referring to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, which ran from Cumberland, Maryland, to the District of Columbia. *Dictionary of American History* (Revised Edition, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976), Volume 2, p. 15. See also Walter L. Sanderlin, *The Great National Project: A History of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1946); and National Park Service, *Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, Maryland* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1942).

3. Henry LaGrange mustered into Company I as a corporal on 26 August 1861. Promoted to sergeant on 21 January 1862, he received commissions as second lieutenant in Company I on 20 June 1864 and first lieutenant on 22 September 1864. LaGrange mustered out of the service on 13 June 1865. Co. I, 50th, DB, and Henry LaGrange, CMSR, RG 94; and Phisterer, *New York*, p. 1681.

4. On 3 March 1863, Congress passed "an Act for Enrolling and Calling Out the National Forces, and for other purposes," which was, in effect, the first national draft in the United States. The first enrollment occurred in May 1863 and the first draft in early July. Many individuals opposed the draft because they were sure it was unfair, and some rioting resulted, especially in New York City. Owen was concerned that riots might occur in Washington, D.C., and his unit would then respond to the emergency. Marvin A. Kreidberg and Merton G. Henry, *History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army 1775-1945* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1955), pp. 104-109.

Letter 9

1. In the provisions of the 3 March 1863 Enrollment Act, a drafted man could pay the War Department up to \$300.00 to procure a substitute for him. Kreidberg and Henry, *Military Mobilizations*, pp. 111–113.

Letter 10

1. No information pertaining to Cousin Lucretia could be found.

2. Enrolled at Owego on 14 August 1861, George Forsyth became a musician in Company I, Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment. Promoted to drum major as of 1 November 1861, he transferred to the noncommissioned officer staff. Reduced to musician on 18 September 1862, he received a medical discharge from the Army on 3 April 1863 following a lengthy illness. George Forsyth, CMSR, RG 94.

3. Starting on 10 July 1863, Quincy A. Gillmore, commander of the Department of the South, commenced an artillery bombardment of the Confederate-occupied fortifications in Charleston Harbor. At 1:30 on the morning of 22 August, Union troops started firing on the city of Charleston itself. Gillmore hoped to force the city and its defenses to surrender quickly but the U.S. forces did not occupy Charleston until 18 February 1865. *Official Records, Army*, Series I, Volume 28, Part I, pp. 3–39, 201–202, 225–239, 597–679, and 682–684, and Part II, pp. 51–52 and 58–59; and Volume 47, Part I, pp. 1019–20. E. Milby Burton, *The Siege of Charleston, 1861–1865* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1970), pp. 251–254; and Frank Barnes, *Fort Sumter* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1962), pp. 26–28.

4. South Carolina, in which Charleston is located, was the first state to secede from the Union. Also, most authorities contend that the Civil War began when secessionists in Charleston commenced firing on Fort Sumter in the harbor on 12 April 1861. Thus, Owen, like many others, blamed the citizens of Charleston for causing the Civil War. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, pp. 299–300.

5. Apparently, Owen is referring to the New York City draft riots that occurred in July 1963. Protests against the draft ensued elsewhere in the state.

Letter 11

1. The Eleventh Corps of the Army of the Potomac, constituted on 12 September 1862, included a large number of German-speaking soldiers. Routed by Stonewall Jackson's men at Chancellorsville and again by other Confederate troops at Gettysburg, the corps transferred to the Army of the Cumberland on 25 September 1863, the day that Owen saw it at Fairfax Station. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, p. 193.

2. The 137th New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment, organized at Binghamton, New York, mustered into federal service on 25 September 1862. Serving with the Army of the Cumberland until the fall of 1863, the regiment then transferred to the Army of the Cumberland and remained with it until the end of the war. Fredrick B. Dyer, *A Compendium of the Rebellion* (Reprint, New York: Thomas Yoseloff, Publisher, 1959), Volume 3, p. 1457.

3. Constituted in September of 1862 in the Army of the Potomac, the Twelfth Army Corps transferred to the Army of the Cumberland in September of 1863. In April of 1864, the corps, along with the Eleventh, became part of the Twentieth. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, p. 194.

Letter 12

1. John Frear mustered into Company H, Third New York Volunteer Infantry Regiment, on 14 May 1861 and left the service on 21 May 1863. John Frear, CMSR, RG 94.

Letter 13

1. A corduroy bridge included a roadbed constructed of wooden logs laid crosswise.

2. Major General George Gordon Meade, a former Engineer officer, was commander of the Army of the Potomac from 28 June 1863 to the end of the war. Johnson and Malone, *DAB*, Volume 6, pp. 474–476.

3. Following the initial draft in July 1863, President Lincoln called for 300,000 three-year volunteers on 17 October and warned that if he did not get them, he would conduct a new draft on 5 January 1864. Later, the President postponed the draft until 15 April 1864. Kreidberg and Henry, *Military Mobilization*, pp. 106–108.

Letter 14

1. Discharged from the service on 26 December 1863 to reenlist as a veteran volunteer, Owen received a new bounty and 35 days' furlough. His furlough lasted from 29 December 1863 to 1 February 1864. Thomas J. Owen, CMSR, RG 94.

2. Ira Spaulding enrolled on 5 August 1861 at Niagara, New York, and mustered into federal service as a captain, commanding Company E, on 29 August 1861. On 8 August 1862, he transferred to Company F, became a major on 14 October 1862, and received a promotion to lieutenant colonel on 1 January 1864. Breveted a brigadier general of U.S. Volunteers to date from 9 April 1865, he mustered out of the service on 14 June 1865. Phisterer, *New York*, p. 1687, and Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, p. 781.

3. Major General John Newton, a Corps of Engineers officer in peacetime and Chief of Engineers from 6 March 1884 to 27 August 1886, commanded the First Corps, Army of the Potomac, from 2 July 1863 to 24 March 1864. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, p. 593.

4. The First Corps, constituted in the Army of the Potomac on 13 September 1862, existed until March of 1864, when its strength was so small because of casualties that the remaining men were transferred to the Second, Fifth, and Sixth corps. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, pp. 187–188.

Letter 15

1. "Lords of Creation" apparently refers to the rich plantation owners.

2. Edmund C. Pritchett, the chaplain of the regiment, was in Washington, D.C., in February of 1864. Phisterer, *New York*, p. 1685; and Regimental Returns, January and February 1864, Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment; and Muster Rolls, 31 December 1863–9 February 1864, Field and Staff, Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment, from Muster Rolls of Volunteer Organizations: Civil War, Mexican War, Creek War, Cherokee Removal, and Other Wars, 1863–1865 (hereafter referred to as MRs), RG 94.

3. Apparently, "beautiful emblem of the Union" refers to the United States flag flying above the various camps of the many Army units in the area.

4. Mustered in as a private in Company I on 6 September 1861, John W. Bunzey became an artificer in 1863 and received a promotion to corporal on 23 March

1864. Bunzey mustered out of the service on 13 June 1865. Co. I, 50th, DB, and John W. Bunzey, CMSR, RG 94.

Letter 16

1. The cause of George Forsyth's death could not be found.

Letter 17

1. Almost three-fourths of the men in the Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment reenlisted for the remainder of the war during the winter of 1863–1864. However, under new legislation, the regiment was authorized 12 companies of 150 men each, and needed many recruits and additional officers. Owen hoped to receive a commission as an officer but he was afraid that not enough men would enlist to justify his promotion. Actually, the regiment received more than enough recruits. New York State Monuments Commission for the Battlefields of Gettysburg and Chattanooga, *Final Report on the Battlefield of Gettysburg* (Albany: J.B. Lyon Company, 1902) (hereafter referred to as NYSMC, *Final Report*), Volume 3, pp. 1093–94.

Letter 18

1. Lester Champlin enlisted as a private on 2 January 1864 and joined Company I in Virginia on 25 February. He mustered out of the service on 13 June 1865. Lester Champlin, CMSR, RG 94.
2. After enlisting in the service on 4 January 1864, Frederick Hunt joined Company I in Virginia on 25 February. On 13 June 1865, he mustered out of the service. Frederick Hunt, CMSR, RG 94.
3. More than enough men enlisted in the Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment, and the Fifteenth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment organized four full companies from the surplus recruits. NYSMC, *Final Report*, Volume 3, p. 1094.
4. On the back of the photograph (carte de visite) of Owen that appears in this publication is the inscription "J. Berry, Photographer, Owego, N.Y." Most likely, the photograph mentioned by Owen is the same as the one reproduced here.
5. Jefferson Ferguson mustered into Company I as a private on 26 August 1861. Later an artificer, he then received a promotion to corporal on 5 May 1864 and mustered out of the service on 13 June 1865. Co. I, 50th, DB, and Jefferson Ferguson, CMSR, RG 94.
6. Mustered into the service as a sergeant in Company I on 26 August 1861, Albert B. Beers was reduced to a private on 1 December 1863 for gambling. Promoted to artificer on 1 April 1864, he mustered out of the service on 26 August 1865. Co. I, 50th, DB, and Albert B. Beers, CMSR, RG 94.

Letter 19

1. Among the Owen Papers in the custody of the Historical Division, Office, Chief of Engineers, is a letter, dated 18 April 1864, in which Milicent refers to Thomas J. Owen as "my younger brother." In both the 1850 and 1860 National Censuses, the Owens listed three children—Mary, the oldest; Thomas; and Alice, the youngest. The 1840 National Census and the ones preceding it did not list children. Thus, Milicent could be a much older sister, possibly 20 or more years older than Thomas, or Mary may have adopted the name Milicent. Thomas J. Owen Papers, Historical Division, Office, Chief of Engineers,

Washington, D.C., and Numbers 5–8, p. 257, Owego, Roll 604, Microcopy 432, *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850* (hereafter referred to as M432), and Numbers 27–31, p. 402, Owego Roll 867, M653, RG 29.

2. For a map showing the location of Yorktown batteries 1 and 4, see *Official Atlas*, Plate 14, Map 1. Battery No. 1, at Farinholt's (Farenholdt) House on the right bank of Wormley's Creek at its junction with the York River, eventually mounted two 200-pound and five 100-pound Parrott guns. Battery No. 4, at Moore's House in a ravine under the plateau, mounted ten 12-inch seacoast mortars. *Official Records, Army*, Series I, Volume II, Part I, pp. 272, 318–319, 324, 331, 334, and 339–340; and Thienel, "Engineers in the Union Army," p. 38.

3. As he often did, Owen left out a word between "large" and "in." Perhaps Owen meant to include the word "gun."

Letter 20

1. The Army of the Potomac received many reports of enemy movements on 17 and 18 March 1864. See *Official Records, Army*, Series I, Volume 33, pp. 687–696.

2. Lieutenant General Ulysses Simpson Grant became the commander of the Armies of the United States on 12 March 1864, a position he held until after the Civil War was over. Instead of staying in Washington, D.C., to direct the various Union military operations, Grant made his headquarters in the field with the Army of the Potomac. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, pp. 352–353.

3. "U.S.," an abbreviation for Ulysses Simpson, refers to Grant, Commanding General of the Armies of the United States.

Letter 22

1. Most officers in volunteer organizations received commissions from the governors of their states. The method of selecting officers in volunteer organizations varied from unit to unit and with the dates of appointment. Early in the war, the rank and file often elected their officers, but later on, examining boards or other officers recommended them. On 17 March 1864, Company I finally had its full complement of 150 men, which created additional new vacancies for officers. Owen received his 30 March 1864 commission, signed by the Democratic Governor Horatio Seymour, as second lieutenant on 16 April, assumed duties in the company on 18 April, mustered for promotion on 27 April, and mustered in as a commissioned officer to date from 28 April. On 1 October 1888, Owen applied for his date of rank as second lieutenant to be redesignated as 17 March 1864 because an original vacancy occurred on that date. The company reached its full complement on 17 March and another officer, technically promoted to first lieutenant on that day, left an additional vacancy. The Adjutant General of the United States Army approved Owen's request, and officially the date of rank became 17 March 1864. William H. Pettes to C. Clapp, 19 April 1864, Regimental Papers, Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment, MRs, 1836–1865; Thomas J. Owen, CMSR; and 13015 VS 1865, Letters Received, Volunteer Service Division (hereafter referred to as LS, VSD), RG 94; Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, p. 733; Kreidberg and Henry, *Military Mobilization*, pp. 115–119; Fred Albert Shannon, *The Organization and Administration of the Union Army 1861–1865* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Arthur H. Clarke Company, 1928), Volume I, pp. 157–160; and Leonard L. Lerwill, *The Personnel Replacement System in the United States Army* (Washington, DC:

Government Printing Office, 1954), pp. 121–123.

2. Private William H. Kipp of Company I died on 10 April 1864 at Rappahannock Station, Virginia, of remittent fever. Co. I, 50th, DB, RG 94.

3. Artificer Aaron Fridley of Company I died on 13 April 1864 at Rappahannock Station, Virginia, from debility following measles. Co. I, 50th, DB, RG 94.

Letter 23

1. Mahlon Bainbridge Folwell, brother of William Watts Folwell, mustered into the Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment as a hospital steward on 10 April 1862. Promoted to first lieutenant in Company I on 19 May 1863, he succeeded his brother as captain and commanding officer on 1 February 1865 and mustered out of the service on 13 June 1865. Co. I, 50th, DB, and Mahlon Bainbridge Folwell, CMSR, RG 94; and Phisterer, *New York*, p. 1679.

2. William H. Pettes, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, served in the Regular Army from 1832 to 1836 before resigning his commission. Mustered into the Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment as a lieutenant colonel on September 1861, Pettes became a colonel commanding the regiment on 3 June 1863. He mustered out of the service on 5 July 1865. Phisterer, *New York*, p. 1685; and Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*. . . (Reprint, Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1965), Volume 1, p. 786.

Letter 24

1. Francis Bacon mustered in as a private in Company I on 28 August 1862 and received a promotion to sergeant on 1 November 1862. Transferring to Company D, Bacon received commissions as second lieutenant on 13 March 1864 and first lieutenant on 21 September 1864. He mustered out of the service on 13 June 1865. Special Order No. 10, Headquarters, Detachment, Engineer Brigade, Rappahannock Station, Virginia, 22 March 1864, directed Captain W.W. Folwell and Sergeants Thomas J. Owen and Francis Bacon to proceed to Washington, D.C., on 24 March as witnesses in a general court martial convened at the headquarters of the Engineer Brigade. Regimental Papers, Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment, MRs, 1836–1865, and Co. I, 50th, DB, RG 94; and Phisterer, *New York*, p. 1675.

2. George W. Marshall, mustered into Company I as a private on 28 August 1862, deserted from camp near Falmouth, Virginia, on 18 January 1863. After apprehension, he was court martialed, found guilty, and sentenced to be shot to death, but the court unanimously recommended mercy. Generals Benham and Meade also recommended mercy, which President Lincoln approved. Marshall was imprisoned on Dry Tortugas at hard labor to work on fortifications and other tasks. In June 1865, he received a dishonorable discharge from the Army and was released from custody. Co. I, 50th, DB, and George W. Marshall, CMSR, RG 94, and M1394, Proceedings of General Court Martials, Record Group 153, Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General (Army), National Archives Building.

3. Located at 11 South A Street, across from the Capitol grounds between 1st Street East and New Jersey Avenue, the Casparis Hotel functioned as a hostelry and a hospital during the Civil War. District of Columbia, Part II, Indexes to Field Records of Hospitals, 1821–1912, RG 94, p. 8, and Map 1, Sequence A, Sheet 44, Post and Reservation File, Record Group 92, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, National Archives Building (hereafter re-

ferred to as RG 92).

4. Originally installed in the Capitol in November 1863, the bronze door, modeled by Randolph Rogers in Rome, Italy, in 1858, was cast in Munich, Germany, by Ferdinand von Miller at the Royal Bavaria Foundry in 1861. Presently located at the eastern entrance to the rotunda in the Capitol, this two-valve door includes eight panels depicting various events in the life of Christopher Columbus. Architect of the Capitol, *Compilation of Works of Art and Other Objects in the United States Capitol* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1965), pp. 368–369.

5. Apparently, Owen attended the Trinity Episcopal Church, located at the corner of 3rd Street West and C Street North. *Washington: What to See and How to See It* (Washington, DC: Philip and Solomons, 1860), p. 11; and William F. Richstein, *The Stranger's Guide-book to Washington City and Everybody's Pocket Handy-book* (Washington, DC: William F. Richstein, 1864), p. 83.

6. Cornelius M. Pierce mustered into Company I as a corporal, was promoted to sergeant on 23 March 1864, and mustered out on 13 June 1865. Cornelius M. Pierce, CMSR, RG 94.

7. Following his muster-in on 26 August 1861, Orvin L. Newell was promoted to corporal in January 1862 and sergeant on 23 March 1864, and mustered out of the service on 13 June 1865 after spending his entire career in Company I. Orvin L. Newell, CMSR, RG 94.

8. Originally mustered into Company K as a private on 18 September 1861, Charles R. Bodle transferred to Company I on 1 November 1861, received promotions to corporal on 1 September 1862 and sergeant on 23 March 1864, and mustered out of the service on 13 June 1865. Charles R. Bodle, CMSR, RG 94.

9. Smith Surdam, originally mustered in as a private in Company D, transferred to Company I on 1 November 1861, became a corporal on 22 June 1862 and sergeant on 23 March 1864, and mustered out on 13 June 1865. Smith Surdam, CMSR, RG 94.

10. James H. Perkins mustered into Company I on 7 September 1861 as a private, became an artificer in the spring of 1863 and corporal on 23 March 1863, and died of illness on 6 October 1864. James H. Perkins, CMSR, RG 94.

11. Mustered into Company I as a private on 26 August 1861, Theodore F. Probasco received a promotion to corporal on 26 October 1862 but reverted back to his original rank on 24 December 1862 for absence without leave. Again promoted to corporal on 23 March 1864, Probasco became a sergeant on 8 October 1864 and mustered out of the service on 13 June 1865. Theodore F. Probasco, CMSR, RG 94.

12. Caleb LaGrange mustered into Company I on 6 September 1862 as a private, became an artificer in the spring of 1863 and corporal on 23 March 1864, and mustered out on 13 June 1865. Caleb LaGrange, CMSR, RG 94.

13. For the location of Hazel Run, see *Official Atlas*, Plate 32, Map 2.

Letter 25

1. Zoan Church was sometimes referred to as Zion or Zoar Church. See *Official Atlas*, Plate 39, Maps 2 and 3; Plate 41, Map 1; Plate 45, Map 1; Plate 47, Map 6; and Plate 93, Map 2.

2. Brigadier General David McMurtie Gregg, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1855, commanded the Second Division, Cavalry Corps, Army of the Potomac, when Owen saw him at Kelly's Ford on 29 March 1864. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, p. 357.

3. Organized in March 1862, the Second Corps served continuously with the Army of the Potomac from 12 September 1862 until June 1865. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, pp. 188–189.
4. Major General Gouverneur Kemble Warren, an Engineer officer for almost all of his Army career, commanded the Second Corps during 2 September–16 December 1863, 29 December 1863–9 January 1864, and 15 January–24 March 1864. However, on 5 May 1864, Warren commanded the Fifth Corps. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, p. 891.
5. Located just east of the junction of the Orange Turnpike and the Germana Road on the Wilderness Battlefield, the Old Wilderness Tavern was a deserted building partially obstructed from view by weeds and trees when Owen saw it. Horace Porter, *Campaigning With Grant* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1961), p. 49.
6. Artificer Beldon Allen of Company E was wounded in the head by a shell while in the rifle pits on 6 May 1864. Not seriously injured, Allen continued to serve with his company throughout the war. Beldon Allen, CMSR, and Muster Roll, 30 April–30 June 1864, Company E, Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment, MRs, 1836–1865, RG 94.
7. The exact identification of Bensen's Farm is unknown but it may be the property down the Rapidan River from Ely's Ford shown on Maps 2 and 3, Plate 39, in the *Official Atlas*.
8. Second lieutenants in the Corps of Engineers, cavalry, light artillery, and ordnance received \$53.33 per month. Infantry and artillery second lieutenants earned \$45.00 each month. Examination of numerous regulations and orders failed to disclose any stipulation that Engineer officers had to have horses but they were paid the same as mounted officers. Pay Department (War Department), *A Compendium of the Pay of the Army from 1785 to 1888* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1888), pp. 42, 44–45, and 48–49, and Adjutant General's Office, *Official Army Register* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1864), pp. 112–115.

Letter 26

1. Impressed by the work of the British Sanitary Commission in the Crimean War, individuals interested in the health of the Civil War soldiers influenced the Secretary of War, Simon Cameron, to issue an order on 9 June 1861 which established the United States Sanitary Commission. Through its various branches, the United States Sanitary Commission supplemented diets, cared for the wounded, established lodges for transient soldiers at railroad depots and a home for discharged soldiers in Washington, D.C., and compiled a list of hospitals. Kenneth W. Munden and Henry Putney Beers, *Guide to Federal Archives Relating to the Civil War* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1962), pp. 587–588; and Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, p. 720.
2. Most likely, Owen is referring to the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad. This railroad ran 75 miles from Aquia Creek on the Potomac River to Richmond, Virginia. Johnston, *Virginia Railroads*, p. 4.
3. Major General Winfield Scott Hancock, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1840, commanded the Second Corps of the Army of the Potomac on 21 May 1864. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, p. 372.
4. Originally mustered in as the Ira Harris Cavalry between August and October 1861, the Fifth New York Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, designated as such on 14 November 1861, recruited in the New York City area. Assigned

at first to the Washington, D.C., area, the regiment later served with the Army of the Potomac and the Army of the Shenandoah. Dyer, *A Compendium*, Volume 3, pp. 1373–74.

5. A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1853, Major General Philip Henry Sheridan commanded the Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac in June of 1864. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, pp. 747–748.

6. Huntley's Crossing was on the Pamunkey River about four miles northwest of Hanover Town, Virginia. The crossing is marked as Hundley's in *Official Atlas*, Plate 92, Map 1, Section 2. *See also* Thienel, "Engineers in the Union Army," p. 41; and Thompson, *Engineer Battalion*, p. 63.

7. The land in Virginia between the York River and James River at the mouth of Chesapeake Bay is often referred to as the Peninsula.

8. Lieutenant General Robert E. Lee, an Engineer officer in the U.S. Army for many years before the Civil War, commanded the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia from June 1862 to April 1865. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, pp. 476–477.

9. U.S.G. is an abbreviation for Ulysses Simpson Grant.

10. As a second lieutenant of Engineers, Owen received \$23.50 a month to hire a servant. He and many other officers hired former slaves as servants. Adjutant General's Office, *Official Register*, 1864, pp. 112–113.

Letter 27

1. Although it is not listed in the index to the *Official Atlas*, Dunkirk, Virginia, does appear on Map 1, Plate 16, southwest of Tappahannock up the Mattaponi River from King William Court House.

Letter 28

1. The exact location of Debson's Landing on the James River could not be located.

Letter 29

1. Before the Campaign of 1864 began, the Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment divided into four battalions. The first, second, and third battalions, composed of three companies each, were assigned to the Second, Fifth, and Sixth Army corps, respectively. The reserve battalion consisted of two companies, C and I. Within the reserve battalion, the two ponton trains, Nos. 4 and 5, each had twelve canvas boats and two twin trestles. Captain William Watts Folwell commanded Ponton Train No. 4, and Owen served with it. Paragraph 10, Special Order No. 92, Army of the Potomac, 9 April 1864, Regimental Papers, Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment, MRS 1836–1865, and Reports of Lieutenant Colonel Ira Spaulding, 9, 12, and 20 December 1864, John G. Barnard Papers, General's Papers and Books, RG 94; and *Official Records, Army*, Series I, Volume 36, Part I, pp. 304–316.

2. Early settlers originally built Fort Powhatan, which was located on the banks of the James River near Little Brandon, Virginia. During the Civil War, the Confederates fortified Fort Powhatan but Union troops seized it on 13 July 1863. Porter, *Campaigning with Grant*, p. 49; Heitman, *Historical Register*, p. 535; and *Historical Information Relating to Military Posts and Other Installations ca. 1700–1900*, Microcopy 661 (hereafter referred to as M661), Volume "P," Roll 6, p. 371, RG 94.

3. Windmill Point does not appear in the index to the *Official Atlas* but appears

on Map 1, Plate 92.

4. Brigadier General James Harrison Wilson, a former Topographical Engineer officer, commanded the Third Division, Cavalry Corps, Army of the Potomac, on 30 June 1864. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, pp. 930–931.

5. Mustered in as a captain in Company C on 17 September 1861, Wesley Brainerd received a promotion to major on 28 November 1862 and a brevet lieutenant colonelcy in August 1864. Mustered out of the Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment, he then became the colonel of the Fifteenth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment. Wesley Brainerd, CMSR, RG 94; and Phisterer, *New York*, pp. 1676–77.

6. Martin Van Brocklin mustered in as first lieutenant of Company I on 18 July 1862. He became captain of Company C on 4 April 1863 and received a brevet lieutenant colonelcy as of 9 April before mustering out of the service on 13 June 1865. Phisterer, *New York*, p. 1687.

Letter 30

1. Light House Point does not appear in the index to the *Official Atlas* but it appears on Map 1, Plate 74. Apparently, Light House Point is the same as Jordans Point.

Letter 31

1. On 9 August 1864, an explosion occurred at City Point, Virginia, on a barge docked at the wharf, which also destroyed a nearby vessel and a building housing large amounts of supplies. Apparently, two Confederate agents, John Maxwell and R.K. Dillard, caused the explosion, which killed and injured many people. *Official Records, Army*, Series I, Volume 42, Part I, pp. 954–956; and Part II, pp. 94–96, 98, 102, and 112.

2. Artificer George Dan died on 21 July 1864 reportedly from “debility aggravated by malingering.” Co. I, 50th, DB, RG 94.

3. Rheumatic fever was the cause of artificer James Randall’s demise on 30 July 1864. Co. I, 50th, DB, RG 94.

4. On 27 July 1864, artificer Squire A. Kimber died of dysentery. Co. I, 50th, DB, RG 94.

5. Artificer Charley R. Stratton died on 5 August 1864 of peritonitis. Co. I, 50th, DB, RG 94.

Letter 32

1. The Fifth Army Corps served in the Army of the Potomac from May 1862 to June 1865. Major General G.K. Warren commanded it from March 1864 to April 1865. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, pp. 190–191.

2. The Petersburg Railroad was sometimes referred to as the Weldon or Petersburg and Weldon. The line ran from Petersburg, Virginia, to Weldon, North Carolina, with a spur from Hickford, Virginia, to Gaston, North Carolina. Johnston, *Virginia Railroads*, pp. 4 and 6.

Letter 33

1. Petersburg, Virginia.

2. Walker V. Personius mustered in as a captain in Company G on 14 September 1861 and resigned his commission on 20 September 1864. Phisterer, *New York*, p. 1685.

Letter 34

1. Enrolling as a private in Company A at Troy, Pennsylvania, on 11 September 1861, Archibald McNaught received promotions to artificer and sergeant. Given a commission as first lieutenant on 29 April 1864, he became captain of Company H on 6 November and then resigned from the service on 14 January 1865. After leaving the service, McNaught received a brevet majority as of 31 March 1865. Phisterer, *New York*, p. 1683.

Letter 35

1. Under Grant's instructions, the Army constructed a railroad from headquarters at City Point to Globe Tavern at Petersburg, Virginia, during the summer of 1864. In operation by 13 September, this short railroad carried important supplies and material from the wharfs at City Point to the troops at Petersburg. Johnston, *Virginia Railroads*, pp. 220–221.

2. By "Chicago Pill," Owen means the peace plank of the Democratic Party, with which George B. McClellan, the Presidential candidate, did not agree.

Letter 36

1. Most likely, Mr. Warner was the Owen family banker.

Letter 37

1. "Lieutenant Bain" refers to Mahlon Bainbridge Folwell.

2. Apparently, Lincoln won the soldier-in-the-field vote by at least 4 to 1. For information pertaining to the soldier vote and the New York absentee voting process for servicemen, see Peter J. Parish, *The American Civil War* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publisher, . . . Inc., 1975), pp. 543–545. Josiah H. Benton's *Voting in the Field: A Forgotten Chapter of the Civil War* (Boston: Private Printing, 1915) is a lengthy discussion of soldier voting in the Civil War.

Letter 38

1. Lucius A. Waldo, who mustered into Company M as a second lieutenant on 19 February 1864, was cashiered on 18 October 1864. Phisterer, *New York*, p. 1688.

2. Originally mustered in as a private in Company M on 2 January 1864, Edward B. Austin received a commission as first lieutenant on 28 April 1864. He was dismissed from the service on 7 November 1864. Phisterer, *New York*, p. 1675.

Letter 39

1. Private Chauncey Crawford of Company I died of unknown causes on 14 November 1864. Co. I, 50th, DB, RG 94.

2. Charles Hollenbeick, a private in Company I, died on 13 October 1864 of unknown causes. Co. I, 50th, DB, RG 94.

Letter 40

1. Fort Stevenson was a Union redoubt constructed in 1864 for the siege of Petersburg. For the location of Fort Stevenson, see Map 2, Plate 67, and Map 2, Plate 79, in the *Official Atlas*, near Fort Mahan. Volume S, Roll 7, M661, RG 94, p. 594.

2. The term "contraband" was often used during the Civil War to refer to slaves who left their masters and entered Union lines to secure their freedom. The

term originated from some Union commanders who referred to escaped or liberated slaves as “contraband of war.” Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, p. 172.

Letter 41

1. Poplar Grove or Poplar Grove Church, captured by Union troops on 18–21 August 1864 during the siege of Petersburg, became the camp of the Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment during the winter of 1864–1865. Today, part of the land is the Poplar Grove National Cemetery. For the general location of Poplar Grove Church, see Map 2, Plate 77, in the *Official Atlas*. Richard Wayne Lykes, *Petersburg Battlefields* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1951), pp. 27 and 52.

2. Also known as the Yellow Tavern, Globe Tavern, Glick House, and Six-Mile House, the Yellow House, a yellow brick structure, was a thriving tavern until the railroads displaced it. For the location of Yellow House (Globe Tavern) on the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad, see Map 8, Plate 67, in the *Official Atlas*. Robert McAllister, *The Civil War Letters of General Robert McAllister*, edited by James I. Robertson (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1965), p. 533, including fn. 48; Charles S. Wainwright, *A Diary of Battle: The Personal Journal of Colonel Charles S. Wainwright, 1861–1865*, edited by Allan Nevins (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1862), p. 452; and telephone conversations with historians Ella Reyburn and John Davis of the Petersburg National Military Park and Archivist-Historian Richard Sommers of the U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

Letter 43

1. Organized on 22 July 1862, the Ninth Corps served in the Army of the Potomac, Department of the Ohio and Department of Washington. While involved in the siege of Petersburg, Major General John Grubb Parke, a former Topographical Engineer, commanded the corps. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, p. 192.

Letter 44

1. Owen apparently witnessed the hangings for desertion of Privates George Bradley of Company H and John Lynch and William Miller of Company F, Fifth New Hampshire Volunteer Infantry Regiment, on Friday, 23 December 1864. The next Friday, 30 December, a firing squad shot Private Michael Genon, or Jenos, of Company B, Fifth New Hampshire Volunteer Infantry Regiment, for desertion. A week later, on 6 January 1865, Privates Michael West of Company G, 184th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment, and John Benson, unassigned, Fifth New Hampshire Volunteer Infantry Regiment, were shot for desertion. Authorized by Army of the Potomac court martial orders, all of these executions occurred, most likely, in the vicinity of Petersburg, Virginia. However, Owen may have witnessed other executions on 6 January instead of the ones mentioned above. Although the location of the executions is unknown, he may have seen Charles King and Henry Regley of Company L, Third New Jersey Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, shot as spies by order of Philip Sheridan. War Department, *List of U.S. Soldiers Executed by United States Authorities During the Late War* (Washington, DC: War Department Printing Office, n.d.)

2. Engineer troops built numerous towers, varying from very crude to sophisticated structures, from which the U.S. Signal Corps could send messages

by the use of flags and be seen for long distances. For a drawing and photograph of signal towers constructed by Engineers, see No. 10, Plate 67, and No. 9, Plate 124, in the *Official Atlas*.

3. Benjamin F. Butler led an unsuccessful expedition against Fort Fisher, North Carolina, in November 1864. On 4 January 1865, troops under the command of Alfred H. Terry left Bermuda Hundreds on a second attempt to capture Fort Fisher and seal off the port of Wilmington, North Carolina, to foreign trade. The fort surrendered on 15 January. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, pp. 292–295.

4. In January 1864, Owen was on leave in Owego. Most likely, while on leave Owen heard Edward Norris Kirk, a prominent Presbyterian and Congregationalist minister and revivalist, speak in Owego or some neighboring town. During the Civil War, Kirk, a strong advocate of the Union cause, held many revivals in the East. Johnson and Malone, *DAB*, Volume 5, pp. 427–428.

Letter 45

1. During the winter of 1864–1865, while encamped at Poplar Grove, the Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment constructed quarters and other buildings including a church of hewn logs. W.J. George, “Church Built, at Petersburg, by Engineers During Civil War,” *Professional Memoirs, Corps of Engineers* 4 (July–August 1912), pp. 521–522.

2. Owen here refers to the capture by the Union troops of Fort Fisher, a casemated earthwork constructed by the Confederates on the right bank of the Cape Fear River at Federal Point, approximately 20 miles below Wilmington, North Carolina. Although, Union troops did not occupy Wilmington until 22 February 1865, the blockade runner traffic, an important economy of the city and the Confederacy, all but ceased after the capture of the Cape Fear defenses. Volume F, Roll 3, M661, RG 94, p. 151; Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, pp. 293–294; and Dallas Irvine, John Ferrell, Dale Floyd, Robert Gruber, and Francis Heppner, *Military Operations of the Civil War: A Guide-Index to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 1861–1865* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1968–1980), Volume 2, Fascicle 2, p. 105, and Volume 3, p. 45.

3. Lincoln appointed Benjamin F. Butler a general in 1861 because of his political influence as a Democrat and lawyer. After holding various commands, Butler led the unsuccessful attack on Fort Fisher, North Carolina, during 7–27 December 1864. On 7 January 1865, Lincoln and Grant relieved Butler of his command of the Army of the James. He returned to his home in Lowell, Massachusetts, an industrial center, which manufactured shoes among other things. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, pp. 292–293, and Johnson and Malone, *DAB*, Volume 2, pp. 357–359.

Letter 46

1. Because Confederate batteries and Union obstructions kept federal gunboats from proceeding up the James River, Benjamin F. Butler suggested a bypass canal. Captain Peter S. Michie, an Engineer officer, began construction of the Dutch Gap Canal on 10 August 1864, but it was not completed until April 1865, too late to be of use to the Union war effort. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, p. 253.

2. On the evening of 23 January 1865, a Confederate fleet attempted to pass the obstructions in the James River and head upriver toward Richmond. Union artillery fired on it during the night of the 23d and morning of the 24th. Finally,

- the fleet retreated downriver leaving one ship aground. On the 25th, the fleet successfully ran past the Union guns and proceeded upriver. *Official Records, Army, Series I, Volume 46, Part I*, pp. 165–170, 176–179, 181–182, and 186.
3. During the Civil War, numerous Union officers received temporary or honorary brevet rank, usually for meritorious service or actions. Thus, a captain could be a brevet brigadier general and might function at one or the other rank depending on his assignment. Following the war, officers normally reverted to their permanent rank but could sign official documents and wear insignia denoting brevet under certain conditions. For more information on brevet rank, see Don Russell's introduction to Percival Lowe's *Five Years a Dragon* (Reprint, Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965).
4. "General P.H.S." refers to Philip H. Sheridan.
5. The Quartermaster's Department chartered the 531-ton steamer *Thomas Collyer*, owned by George B. Collyer, for \$240.18 per day from 1 November 1864 to 5 May 1865. The Army of the Valley, officially the Army of the Shenandoah, Middle Military Division, was established by Sheridan in August 1864. Sheridan held command of the Army of the Shenandoah until February 1865, when Major General Alfred Torbet took over followed by Major General Winfield Scott Hancock in March. "Collyer, Thomas," Charters, Bills of Lading, Claims Papers, Plans and Correspondence Relating to Vessels ("Vessel File"), 1834–1900, RG 92; Congress, *House Executive Document No. 337, Vessels Bought, Sold, and Chartered by the United States, 1861–68* (40th Cong., 2d sess.), pp. 22–23; and Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, pp. 549 and 739.

Letter 47

1. The South Side Railroad had 132 miles of track stretching from City Point to Lynchburg, Virginia. Johnston, *Virginia Railroads*, pp. 4 and 6.

Letter 48

1. In 1865, the federal government purchased "The Battle of Lake Erie," painted by William H. Powell under contract. It now hangs in the Senate wing of the Capitol in the east staircase. Architect of the Capitol, *Compilation of Works*, pp. 126–130.
2. Noah Brooks, newspaper correspondent who spent most of the Civil War in Washington, D.C., wrote that a full-length, life-size portrait of Grant, painted in oil by John Antrobus of Chicago, hung in one of the committee rooms of the House of Representatives on 29 February 1864. Possibly, this painting later hung in the rotunda. Noah Brooks, *Mr. Lincoln's Washington: The Civil War Dispatches of Noah Brooks*, edited by P.J. Staudenraus (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1967), pp. 288–289.
3. The Quartermaster's Department completed work on the outside of the Capitol dome on 2 December 1863 but, of course, the inside took longer. On 25 November 1864, Noah Brooks remarked that the interior of the dome was just completed. Albert E. Cowdrey, *A City for the Nation: The Army Engineers and the Building of Washington, D.C., 1790–1967* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1979), p. 21; and Brooks, *Mr. Lincoln's Washington*, p. 391.

Letter 49

1. The pike went from Winchester to Staunton, Virginia.
2. George Armstrong Custer graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1861 and as a cavalry commander he became a major general of volunteers on

15 April 1865 when only 25 years of age. Custer commanded the Third Cavalry Division in the Shenandoah. He is best known for his disastrous defeat and death at the Battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, p. 216.

3. Resigning his cadetship at West Point in May 1861, Thomas Lafayette Rosser became an officer in the Confederate army. As a brigadier general, commissioned in September 1863, he led a cavalry brigade in the Shenandoah Valley and met Custer in battle several times. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, pp. 709–710.

4. Jubal A. Early, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy who had served in the U.S. Regular Army, joined the Confederate forces in 1861. Rising to major general, he commanded an army corps in Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. In June 1864, he took his corps to the Shenandoah Valley where he encountered Sheridan's troops numerous times. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, pp. 224–225.

5. In 1832, the James River and Kanawha Company, formed from the James River Company, initiated plans for a James River and Kanawha Canal. Construction ended in 1851 with the canal completed from Richmond to Buchanan, Virginia. Owen returned from the Shenandoah Valley to the Petersburg area by traversing the towpath of the James River and Kanawha Canal. *Official Records, Army*, Series I, Volume 46, Part I, pp. 488–495; and Johnson and Malone, *DAB*, Volume 3, p. 488. See also Wayland F. Dunaway, *History of the James River and Kanawha Company* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1922); and James J. Kirkwood, *Waterways to the West, James River and Kanawha* (Washington, DC: Eastern National Parks and Monument Association, 1936).

6. The Virginia Central Railroad ran 195 miles from Richmond to Jackson's River, Virginia. Johnston, *Virginia Railroads*, pp. 4–5.

Letter 50

1. On Thursday and Friday, 16 and 17 March 1865, Owego Creek overflowed and caused a record flood in Owego, New York. In fact, the large Susquehanna River and its many tributaries caused record floods throughout New York and Pennsylvania in the spring of 1865. *The Owego Gazette*, 23 and 30 March 1865.

2. Unfortunately, the location of Five Mile Creek could not be found on the various maps available but, most likely, a more specific one might show the stream.

3. Established in 1864, the Army of the James was commanded by Benjamin F. Butler. Intended to threaten Richmond from the south and east while Grant descended on the city from the north, Butler's command failed miserably. Confederate forces maneuvered the Army of the James into Bermuda Hundreds, where it remained until late in the war. *Dictionary of American History*, Volume 3, p. 488.

4. Presumably, Hancock Station was a depot on Grant's City Point and Petersburg Railroad. The exact location of Hancock Station, probably named for Winfield Scott Hancock, is unknown.

5. In his report dated 16 May 1865, Philip H. Sheridan, commander of cavalry in the Army of the Potomac, stated “. . . I moved out on the 29th March, in conjunction with the armies operating against Richmond. . . .” The 29th was the starting date of the Appomattox Campaign, 29 March–9 April 1865. *Official Records, Army*, Series I, Volume 46, Part I, pp. 557 and 1101–10.

Letter 51

1. The Confederates established a battery at Howlett's House in June 1864 to fire upon Union ships attempting to pass up the James River. Also known as Battery Dantzler, the Howlett House Battery was located on the James River at Trent's Reach across from Farrar's Island. For the exact location of the battery, see Map 3, Plate 77, in the *Official Atlas* and the map between pages 632 and 633 in Volume 11, Series I, of Navy Department, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1894–1922) (hereafter referred to as *Official Records, Navy*). *Official Records, Army*, Series I, Volume 40, Part II, pp. 290 and 302; and *Official Records, Navy*, Series I, Volume 10, pp. 185, 666, 709, and 730. See also next annotation.
2. Battery Dantzler, Howlett House Battery, mounted different numbers of guns, including Brookes and Columbiads, at various times. The Brooke, developed by John M. Brooke of the Confederate Navy, was a cast-iron gun, usually rifled, and easily identifiable by its reinforced hooped rings. The Columbiad, developed before the War of 1812, was a large-caliber, usually smoothbore cannon able to fire heavy charged shot and shell at high elevations. Edward S. Farrow, *Farrow's Military Encyclopedia: A Dictionary of Military Knowledge; Illustrated with Maps and About Three Thousand Wood Engravings* (New York: Edward S. Farrow, 1885), Volume I, p. 249; Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, pp. 88 and 167–168; Emanuel Raymond Lewis, "The Ambiguous Columbiads," *Military Affairs* 28 (Fall 1964), pp. 111–112; Warren Ripley, *Artillery and Ammunition of the Civil War* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1970), pp. 127–128; *Official Records, Army*, Series I, Volume 42, Part II, p. 1222, and Part III, p. 1354; *Official Records, Navy*, Series I, Volume 10, pp. 698, 709, and 738–739, and Volume 11, p. 206; and Henry L. Abbot, *Siege Artillery in the Campaign Against Richmond*, Professional Papers, Corps of Engineers, No. 14 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1867), p. 121. For pictures of guns mounted at Battery Dantzler, see Francis T. Miller, *The Photographic History of the Civil War* (New York: The Review of Reviews Company, 1911), Volume 3, pp. 93 and 97. Various photographs of Brookes and Columbiads can be found in Ripley, *Artillery and Ammunition*.
3. During the Civil War, a gun was "spiked" by forcing a spike into the vent of the gun and breaking it off, thus rendering the gun inoperable. Quick, *Dictionary of Weapons*, p. 415.
4. In a report dated 4 April 1865, Admiral David Dixon Porter stated that the Confederates had sunk their ships in the James River and some of them were in sight above the water. Apparently, Owen saw one of these sunken ships on 4 April 1865. *Official Records, Navy*, Series I, Volume 12, p. 101.
5. Jefferson ("Jeff") Davis, the president of the Confederate States of America, was a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, and former Regular Army officer, Secretary of War, and senator from Mississippi. Many southerners held Davis personally responsible for Confederate defeat. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, pp. 225–226.
6. Alexander Piper, formerly a Regular Army artillery officer, served as colonel of the Tenth New York Heavy Artillery Regiment. Mustered into service in September 1862 at Sackett's Harbor, New York, the Tenth served in the Defenses of Washington, Army of the Potomac, Army of the James, and Middle Military Department. The regiment mustered out of the service at Petersburg, Virginia, on 23 June 1865. Phisterer, *New York*, p. 1455; and Dyer, *A Com-*

Letter 53

1. Although attacked, William Henry Seward, Secretary of State, did not die from his injuries. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, p. 732.
2. "Mr. Johnson," refers to Andrew Johnson, who had been Vice President under Lincoln and succeeded to the Presidency following the assassination.

Letter 54

1. The insignia for colonels in the U.S. Army since before the Civil War is a spread eagle. Thus Owen referred to the colonels by calling them "spread eagles," *Uniform Regulations for the Army of the United States 1861* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1961), p. 18.
2. Most likely, Owen's reference to "nigger show" denoted minstrel shows. During the winter of 1864–1865, the Fiftieth New York Volunteer Engineer Regiment held minstrel shows almost every night in the church at Poplar Grove. Apparently, Owen felt that all the high-ranking officials cared about were minstrel shows and they were not concerned with military matters. George, "Church Built," p. 521.
3. Joseph E. Johnston, a former Topographical Engineer officer, commanding the Confederate Army of Tennessee, wrote William T. Sherman, commanding the Military Division of the Mississippi, on 14 April 1865 to initiate peace negotiations. On 18 April, Johnston and Sherman signed an accord which authorities in Washington rejected. The final surrender occurred at Durham Station, North Carolina, on 26 April. *Official Records, Army*, Series I, Volume 47, Part I, pp. 31–35 and 937–938.

Letter 55

1. Established on 7 August 1864, the Middle Military Division included all or part of the states of Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia, Ohio, Maryland, and Virginia. The War Department discontinued the Middle Military Division on 27 June 1865. Raphael P. Thian, compiler, *Notes Illustrating the Military Geography of the United States 1813–1880* (Reprint, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), p. 21.
2. Mustered into the service as a private in Company G on 20 August 1862, Mahlon Bainbridge received promotions to corporal and sergeant. When Owen became a first lieutenant as of 15 October 1864, Bainbridge transferred to Company I to fill the vacancy. Commissioned a second lieutenant in Company I on 23 January 1865, Bainbridge served in that capacity until mustered out on 13 June 1865. Phisterer, *New York*, pp. 1675–76.
3. "Sherman's Blunder" refers to that general's failure to negotiate a surrender of Joseph Johnston's forces on 18 April 1865 that was acceptable to authorities in Washington.
4. Owen means Stephenson's Depot or Station on the Winchester and Potomac Railroad just above Winchester. For the exact location of Stephenson's Depot or Station, see Map 4, Plate 39, and Map 3, Plate 43, in the *Official Atlas*.
5. M. Truman Smyth mustered into the service as a private in Company I on August 1862. Promoted to artificer on 1 April 1864, he later served as a clerk. Smyth mustered out of the service on 13 June 1865. M. Truman Smyth, CMSR, RG 94.



Engineer ponton train on the move, from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated*, January 3, 1863.